

at least one back resilient member positioned between the yoke back wall and the back end of the draft gear assembly;

the front and back resilient members being compressible;

a rear follower positioned rearward of the back resilient member;

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a draft sill having front stops, the coupler follower including a pair of stop contact surfaces for contact with the draft sill front stops and a coupler bearing surface between the stop contact surfaces, at least part of the coupler bearing surface being forward of the stop contact surfaces of the coupler follower.

Please substitute claim 9 as follows for that currently pending:

8 9. (amended) A draft gear assembly for use with a railcar having a coupler member and a draft sill with front and rear stops defining a draft gear pocket to receive at least part of the draft gear assembly, the draft gear pocket having a length between the front stops and rear stops, the draft gear assembly having front and back ends and comprising:

a yoke having a back wall, a top wall extending from the back wall toward the front end of the draft gear assembly, and a bottom wall extending from the back wall toward the front end of the draft gear assembly;

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a coupler follower positioned between the back wall of the yoke and the front end of the draft gear assembly, the coupler follower having a generally vertical, indented forward facing stop surfaces;

at least one front resilient member positioned between the coupler follower and the back wall of the yoke;

at least one back resilient member positioned between the yoke back wall and the back end of the draft gear assembly;

a rear follower positioned rearward of the back resilient member, the rear follower having a rearward facing stop surface;

a center rod extending through the rear follower, through the back resilient member and through the back wall of the yoke;

wherein prior to installation on the railcar the yoke, coupler follower, front resilient member, back resilient member, rear follower and center rod comprise an assembly, the assembly further including a shortening member on the center rod at the rear follower, the length

of the assembly between the stop surface of the coupler follower and the stop surface of the rear follower being less than the length of the draft gear pocket;

wherein after installation the rear follower is positioned against the rear stops; and

wherein after installation the yoke has a neutral position, a full draft position forward of the neutral position, and a full buff position rearward of the neutral position;

the center rod being free from tension when the coupler member is in the full draft position;

the center rod being free from tension and compression when the coupler member is in the neutral position; and

the center rod being free from compression when the coupler member is in the full buff position.

Please substitute claim 17 as follows for that currently pending:

16/ 17. (amended) A draft gear assembly for use with a railcar having a coupler member and a draft sill, the draft gear assembly having front and back ends and comprising:

a yoke having a back wall, a top wall extending from the back wall toward the front end of the draft gear assembly, a bottom wall extending from the back wall toward the front end of the draft gear assembly, and a yoke stop;

a draft sill having front stops;

a coupler follower forward of the back wall of the yoke and having a forward facing surface positioned against the yoke stop; said coupler follower including a pair of stop contact surfaces for contact with the draft sill front stops and a coupler bearing surface between the stop contact surfaces, at least part of the coupler bearing surface being forward of the stop contact surfaces of the coupler follower;

at least one front resilient member positioned between the coupler follower and the back wall of the yoke;

at least one back resilient member positioned between the yoke back wall and the back end of the draft gear assembly;

a rear follower positioned rearward of the back resilient member, the rear follower having a rearward facing stop surface;

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a center rod extending through the rear follower, through the back resilient member and through the back wall of the yoke; and
a shortening member on the center rod at the rear follower.

Please substitute claim 21 as follows for that currently pending:

20/ 21. (amended) In combination, a draft gear assembly, a coupler and a draft sill, the draft sill having a pair of front stops and a pair of rear stops;
the draft gear assembly having front and back ends and comprising:
a yoke having a back wall, a top wall extending from the back wall toward the front end of the draft gear assembly, and a bottom wall extending from the back wall toward the front end of the draft gear assembly, the yoke having a buff stroke from a neutral position to a full buff position and a draft stroke from the neutral position to a full draft position;
the back wall of the yoke being between the front stops and rear stops of the draft sill;
a coupler follower positioned between the back wall of the yoke and the front stops of the draft sill, the coupler follower having generally vertical, indented forward facing stop surfaces and having a buff stroke from the neutral position to a full buff position;
a rear follower positioned against the rear stops of the draft sill, the yoke back wall being longitudinally spaced from the rear follower;
at least one front resilient member between the coupler follower and the back wall of the yoke;
at least one back resilient member between the rear follower and the back wall of the yoke;
a coupler extending forward from the yoke, the coupler having a neutral position, a draft stroke from the neutral position to a full draft position forward of the neutral position and a buff stroke from the neutral position to a full buff position back from the neutral position;
the coupler and yoke draft stroke being such that the distance between the front face of the yoke back wall and the coupler follower decreases from the neutral spacing when the coupler is in the full draft position and the distance between the rear face of the yoke back wall and the rear follower increases from the neutral spacing when the coupler is in the full draft position;
the coupler, yoke and coupler follower buff stroke being such that the distance between the front face of the yoke back wall and the coupler follower decreases from the neutral spacing

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when the coupler is in the full buff position and the distance between the rear face of the yoke back wall and the rear follower decreases from the neutral spacing when the coupler is in the full buff position.

Please substitute claim 24 as follows for that currently pending:

23/ 24. (amended) The combination of claim 21 further including a center rod extending through the rear follower, through the back resilient member and through the back wall of the yoke,

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C wherein the yoke, coupler follower, front resilient member, rear follower and center rod comprise an assembly prior to installation, the assembly further including a shortening member on the center rod at the rear follower, the length of the assembly from the coupler follower to the rear follower being less than 24-5/8 inches;

and wherein after installation the center rod is free from tension when the coupler moves through the draft stroke and free from compression when the coupler moves through the buff stroke.

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Please cancel claim 3.

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 17 have been amended to include the feature that at least part of the coupler bearing surface on the coupler follower is forward of the stop contact surfaces. Claims 9 and 21 have been amended to include the feature that the coupler follower has generally vertical, forward facing stop surfaces.

U.S. Patent No. 2,876,911 – Winther discloses a yoke and follower for use in a train cushion draft gear and coupler. A yoke 1 extends in a draft gear pocket; yoke 1 contains a front cushion 18 between its rear wall 16 and extending between yoke 1 arms 17 and the rear face 27 of follower 23. Rear cushion 20 of the draft gear is fit between rear wall 16 of yoke 1 and rear follower 21, which reacts against rear stop lugs 22. Front follower 23 has legs 24 that extend forwardly from front face 28 to engage stop lugs 25.